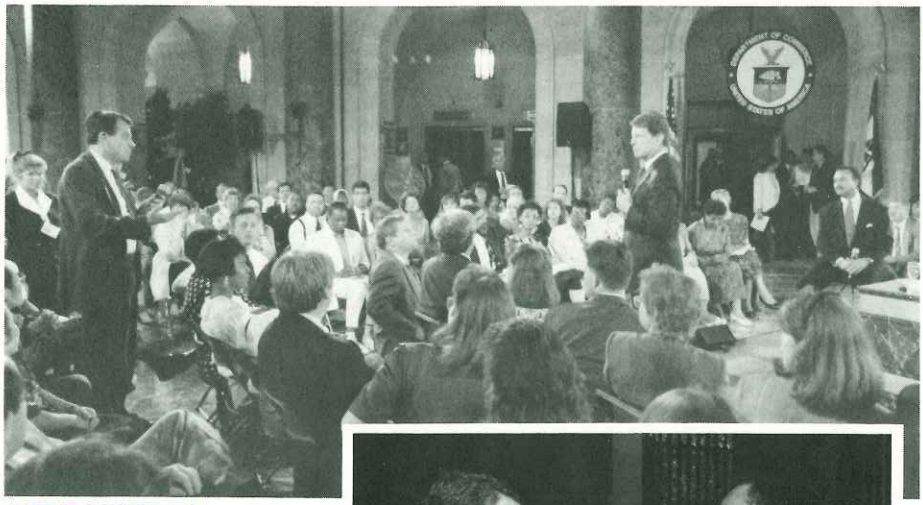
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CommercePeople

SEPTEMBER 1993

NOAA'S CHALLENGE

Story on p. 8



GORE COMES TO COMMERCE: Vice President Gore and Secretary of Commerce Brown brought their message of reinventing government to hundreds of DoC employees who gathered in the HCHB Main Lobby and Auditorium. The Aug. 3 meeting, part of the National Performance Review designed by President Clinton and directed by the vice president, gave employees opportunities to share their views on how to make the federal government work better and cost less. Vice President Gore told employees that the Administration is committed to giving them more power to make real changes and improvements in their jobs.

Mattingly Agency Engineer Of Year

George E. Mattingly of NIST's Chemical Science and Technology Laboratory recently was named Engineer of the Year for NIST/DoC.

Mattingly was one of 31 federal employees recognized by the National Society of Professional Engineers' practice division, Professional Engineers in Government, as top engineers for their agencies.

Mattingly was recognized for outstanding leadership in the development of measurement technology, national and international standards, and calibration services to meet industrial and governmental requirements for fluid measurements.

COVER PHOTO:
These electronic "eyes," silhouetted against the Maine sky, are part of the east coast over-the horizon radar antenna array. NOAA (featured in this issue, starting on page 8) is examining how they can be put to peacetime use.

ECONOMICS EXPERT VISITS BUREAU OF CENSUS: Professor Ronald H. Coase (second from left), a Nobel Prize recipient in economics (1991) and professor emeritus at the University of Chicago, recently visited the Bureau of the Census (CEN). He spent a day working with economists at the Center for Economic Studies (CES). He encouraged them to continue their investigtion into the fundamental characteristics of business firms. At a reception in Coase's honor, Acting CEN Director Dr. Harry A. Scarr (far right), Associate Director Charles A. Waite (third from left) and CES Division Chief Robert H. McGuckin (far left) welcomed Coase to the Census Bureau and presented him with the Census Bureau seal.

*QUICK THINKING EMPLOYEE: Why **did** Margaret Byrd, an accounting technician in the Bureau of Census (CEN) Financial Services Branch, receive flowers from a bureau vendor? It's because she saved his struggling computer products business by arranging for quick payment of his bill, which he agreed to discount by 6.5 percent in exchange for the bureau's speedy settlement of the debt. By thinking quickly and taking initiative, Byrd saved a company that was in danger of going-out-of-business, and she saved the bureau (and untimately, taxpayers) about $6,900. Byrd worked late to arrange the payment on the day she was supposed to leave early to prepare for her daughter's graduation (magna cum laude with an accounting degree from Howard University). Byrd and Lafon Lewis, her supervisor, have saved the bureau $62,884 by quickly paying vendors who provide discounts for that service.*

Commerce Joins Green Movement

The Commerce Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the District of Columbia have signed an agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) to help inner-city communities in the District better deal with a growing environmental crisis.

The agreement launched the so-called Green Movement program which will be adopted later in other inner-city communities across the country.

Under the program, local jurisdictions, in cooperation with the federal government, will provide inner-city communities with expertise on environmental matters. They will also help create job opportunities and promote growth of minority businesses specializing in environmental improvements in inner-city communities.

Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown, (left to right), Mayor of the District of Columbia Sharon Pratt Kelly, EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner and HUD's Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Jean Nolan (who represented Secretary of HUD Henry G. Cisneros) sign the Memorandum of Understanding at the Green Movement Signing Ceremony.

The Commerce Department, through its Minority Business Development Agency, will help stimulate minority economic growth and development relating to the environment and help develop new ventures for minority firms qualified in environmental matters.

EPA, the lead funding agency for the program, will support the education of inner-city residents on environmental issues such as solid waste disposal and recycling.

HUD will provide education on such matters as lead abatement and housing weatherization.

'Kids At Commerce' It's Among The Best

The Commerce Child Care Center, offering care for children of Commerce parents and others, is entering its fifth fall session.

Operating near capacity, the center recommends the parents — and particularly prospective parents — lose no time in placing their child's name on its waiting list.

Originally founded in 1989 by Commerce Secretary C. William Verity and a volunteer parents' board headed by Malcolm Barr, OPA O/S, the center enjoys the support of department administrative services and the General Services Administration.

Barr, board member at DOT Daycare Inc., which also oversees Bureautots at the Census Bureau, said the Commerce facility, particularly the courtyard-located playground, is considered among the best in the national capital area.

Commerce Child Care Center is managed by Funshine Preschool of Arlington, Va. The onsite, fulltime director is Ann Meislin. "Ms. Ann" provides the following teacher/child ratios:

9 infants (3-12 months), 1.3;
9 'ones' (12-24 months) 1.3;
8 toddlers (24- 30 months), 1.4;
10 older twos (2 1/2 - 3 1/2 years), 1.5;
14 preschool (3 1/2 - 5 years), 1.7.

Weekly rates range from $155 (infants) to $110 (preschool). Scholarships are available to qualifying Commerce parents, up to a maximum of 50 percent tuition. The Commerce Parents' Board awarded $9,720 in tuition assistance last year.

Child center supporters say Commerce people should remember when filling out their Combined Federal Campaign donation forms in the fall to designate the Commerce Child Care Center for all or part of their donation. The designation number is 7228.

Commerce Child Care Center plans an open house in late September or early October at the facility, 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue (in the Herbert Hoover Building).

Corrected Number

An article in the June/July **Commerce People** issue contained an incorrect phone number for further information on motor coach travel specials offered by Commerce Employees Recreation Association (CERA) and organized by Carter Tours and Sherman Coaches. The correct number for information is 301-322-4241.

Weather Service MIC Glenn H. Trapp Manager Of The Year

This year's selection of National Weather Service Federal Manager of the Year for the Honolulu and Pacific region is Meteorologist In Charge Glenn H. Trapp.

Wearing two hats, Glenn Trapp serves as area manager for the weather service in Hawaii and director of the Central Pacific Hurricane Center.

All federal and military managers in Hawaii and other Pacific islands were eligible for the award. A panel of community leaders judged area managers on the basis of exceptional community service, outstanding management skills and innovations which save tax dollars.

"I feel very fortunate to have received such recognition," Trapp said. "This award is a reflection on our entire weather service staff for outstanding teamwork, effort and performance during Hurricane INIKI."

Glenn H. Trapp, 'Manager of the Year'

Under Trapp's direction, the weather service provided advance warning for key state and local emergency offices well in advance of Hurricane INIKI. This early notification enabled officials to take action which almost certainly reduced loss of life during the Central Pacific's strongest hurricane last year.

Trapp was also recognized for efforts to update the flash flood warning system and strong support of the EEO program by hiring or promoting a record number of women and minorities.

***TWO THUMBS UP:** Economics And Statistics Administration Under Secretary Designee Everett Ehrlich and Ann Azari, chair of the 2000 Census Advisory Committee and mayor of Fort Collins, Colorado, show approval of progress on the 2000 Census research work. The photo was taken during their last committee meeting in Washington. The committee discussed potential census questionnaire designs and a preview of the 1995 Test Census. The 2000 Census Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce on how the next census should be designed and conducted and what kind of data should be collected. Representatives of federal, state and local government; private industry, and non-profit advocacy organizations make up the committee.*

It's Never Too Late To Learn, He Proves

By Malcolm Barr

Is it ever too late to learn? CERA, which does lots of good things and provides many fine services for Commerce people, thinks not.

So it sponsors piano lessons for department personnel, adults who can take a half-hour at lunchtime to achieve what in many instances is a lifelong ambition.

Those of us who've been taking lessons range in age from the mid-20's to the early 60's, which is me, the oldest living piano student at the Commerce Department!

Jim Quesenberry of Arlington, Va., is the long-suffering teacher with infinite patience, both in trying to teach us duffers keyboard skills and finding a downtown parking space during his Thursday lesson period.

For me, just turned 60, the challenge of eventually playing for an audience is compounded by my eight year old son's musical efforts under Quesenberry's tutelage — Malcolm Jr., is progressing much faster than his dad.

Others of us find the weekly half-hour lesson on the Hoover Building's infrequently visited 7th floor an oasis in otherwise busy work schedules that benefit from a break in the routine.

Those who want to test their keyboard skills, or their ability to learn them, can reach instructor Quesenberry either through CERA or directly at (703) 271-8791.

An Early Riser Leaves Commerce

By Steve Teasley

When Candyce Scheerschmidt arises these days to have a cup of coffee and read the morning newspaper, it's not like old times.

First, she no longer has to set two alarm clocks — one electric and one manual — to assure that she awakes at 4 a.m. and leaves in time to get to the Department of Commerce (and her newspapers) by 5:30.

And, during breakfast, she can now read one newspaper...and at her leisure, which is in sharp contrast to the past when she speedily digested eight or more papers (plus perhaps some wire service copy).

Yes, after 15 months on the job, Mrs. Scheerschmidt — who was an Office of Public Affairs (OPA) editorial assistant in the Office of the Secretary — has stepped down from her duties in the "clipping" department.

Some think the job is one of DoC's most unusual ones. It requires arriving before dawn to read the nation's top daily newspapers and clip and copy Department of Commerce-related articles. The clipping packets are distributed to OPA and Office of Secretary personnel who need the information. Clippings are usually delivered to DoC offices before their occupants arrive.

Despite having to scan the material rapidly in order to compile the story package early, Mrs. Scheerschmidt says much of what she read she absorbed.

"You stay well-informed," she said. "Handling cocktail conversations is certainly no problem."

On the other hand, she says, not every story she read was memorable.

"It's funny in a way," she says, "people would come up to me sometimes and ask me why I included a particular story (in the day's clippings), and I wouldn't have even remembered the story."

The most difficult parts of the job, she says, are (1) getting up so early (plus coming in Sundays to clip weekend papers) and (2) the pressure of needing to be there; to her, there was no excuse for missing a workday — "short of death." For example, she remembers braving the 1993 "storm of the century" even though few others made it to any office that day.

She used a backup manual clock in case the electric power at home failed. She usually didn't see her husband, Gene, an acquisitions specialist at NIST, in the mornings because she arose so early. The drive from Alexandria to Commerce "takes about 20 minutes" because there's little traffic on the road at 5 a.m.

"Believe it or not, I was not always the first (to arrive)," she says. In addition to those in security and others in printing who awaited her package of clips, she noticed on Commerce sign-in sheets that some occasionally start their day as early as 2:30 a.m.

But, Commerce building corridors were mostly empty and quiet when she arrived before 5:30, which was okay with Mrs. Scheerschmidt, who says she "can't talk to anyone that early anyway."

She would go to work in her Media Affairs office, reading, clipping and nibbling on "healthy" breakfast snacks.

Depending on the volume of Commerce-related stories, she headed down to printing by 6:30.

By 7:30 every weekday morning, Mrs. Scheerschmidt was on her rounds, distributing 178 copies of the clips. The rest of her day — until quitting time at 2:30 p.m. — was spent going through material mailed in from clipping services and coming in over the wire in preparation for the next day's packet.

Once at home in the afternoon, it was "usually straight to bed for a nap." Bedtime at night was anywhere from 9 p.m. to 11.

What will she do with her new-found freedom? Mrs. Scheerschmidt isn't saying much. But, "sleeping in" — she says maybe even as late as 7 a.m. — is at the top of the list.

Announcements

Census Alumni Plan Reunion on Oct. 15

The Census Alumni Association is planning a reunion Oct. 15, 1993 at Census headquarters from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

All former Census employees or those affiliated with the Census Bureau are eligible for CAA membership. The association allows retirees and former employees to continue longtime friendships and keep in touch with Census Bureau happenings.

The association is currently publishing a quarterly newsletter. Membership is $5.

Jack Keane, Ed Goldfield, Larry Marzetti, Helen Teir, Frank Boucher, Irene White, Dorothy Armstrong and John Buchannan compose the association's board of directors.

For further information or to volunteer to help Oct. 15, readers can contact Census Alumni Association, P.O. Box 1480, Suitland, Md., 20752.

CERA Will Offer '94 Coupon Book

The "Entertainment 1994" coupon book will be available through CERA (Commerce Employee Recreation Association) from approximately mid-September until mid-February. Prior to Sept. 15, books can be reserved by payment.

Coupons are valid on the day the purchaser receives the book. Cost is $35, with proceeds going to CERA for recreation activities and programs.

The book contains coupons that provide discounts of up to half-price on hotels, dining, theater and sports and other entertainment events.

Information is available from Elliot Levy, 482-1606.

Hatch Your Idea Through DoC's 'The Pioneer Fund'

Magazines, newspapers, radio talk shows and *The New York Times'* Bestseller List alike are singing the administration's refrain: it's time to reinvent government.

Both the private and public sectors are grappling with shrinking budgets and cost-conscious customers (in the government's case, taxpayers), but an answer to these ills may lie in reinventing how business is practiced on all levels and in all offices.

The U.S. Department of Commerce may be ahead of the reinvention learning curve: it has been conducting an innovation program, aptly named the Pioneer Fund. Since its beginnings, with just 20 applications in 1987, the program now boasts a whopping 153 applications reviewed for fiscal year 1993.

And the competition is stiff — grants are funded at a clip of about nine per year. All grant applications submitted, whether funded or not, have one common theme — they present ideas that in some way seek to improve and enhance the operations and procedures of a given office.

Anyone can submit an idea to the Pioneer Fund, whether an office director or clerical employee. The proposed programs must be unique and present innovative ideas for improving quality within the applicant's office, and the funding sought must not for be something that would normally be listed as a budget line item, i.e. salaries, travel, basic computer hardware upgrades, etc.

Say those responsible for operating the program, The Pioneer Fund is about realizing better ways of doing business; it's about taking educated risks with cutting edge technology; it's about putting a great idea into words and making that idea work. As such, the program directly advances Secretary Brown's goals of reinventing government.

Ideally, the programs submitted should involve technology or techniques

Continued on p. 16

FISCAL YEAR 1994 SUBMISSION DEADLINES

$5,000 or less:

1st Quick Reaction Submission Deadline	October 12, 1993
1st Quick Reaction Reply Deadline	November 2, 1993
2nd Quick Reaction Submission Deadline	March 7, 1993
2nd Quick Reaction Reply Deadline	March 28, 1993

$5,000 to $50,000

Pioneer Fund Submission Deadline	December 3, 1993
Pioneer Fund Reply Deadline	February 1, 1993

FISCAL YEAR 1993 WINNERS

PIONEER FUND WINNERS
$5,000 to $50,000

Improving Public Access to Mathematical Computer Software
Dr. Ronald Boisvert
National Institute of Standards and Technology
$15,000

Fisheries Statistics: Emerging Data Entry Technology
Paul Anninos
National Marine Fisheries Service*

Groundfish Survey Data Collection Using Pen-Based Computer Technology
Thomas Azarovitz, William Kramer, Linda Despres-Patanjo
National Marine Fisheries Service*

*These two separate NMFS offices received a co-grant of $50,000

Using a Geographic Information System in River Forecast Center Operations
Rick Koehler, Dave Brandon
National Weather Service
$30,000

Geographic Information System for Tourism Development
Scott Johnson
U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration
$32,000

QUICK REACTION WINNERS
$5,000 or less

Solvent Recycler
Judith Krzynowek
National Marine Fisheries Service
$1,895

Idaho/Oregon Fisher Screen Program
Bryan Nordlund
National Marine Fisheries Service*

Promotional Video to Protect Salmon
Marcin Whitman
National Marine Fisheries Service*

**These two separate NMFS offices received a co-grant of $5,000*

A Power System for Continuous Measurements of Air Quality and Meteorology in Remote Locations
Tilden Meyers
Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
$5,000

The Portable National Trade Data Bank
Barnaby Dorfman/Moira Cusick
International Trade Administration
$4,500

TQM Corner

PATs And QATs Flourish At Commerce . . .

PATs and QATs are alive and well at the Department of Commerce!

What are Process Action Teams (PATs) or Quality Action Teams (QATs)? They're a group of six to 10 people that pool their skills, talents, and knowledge, and with some training, are able to tackle complex and chronic problems that may aid our department. They identify and solve problems using a scientific or data-based approach and come up with effective, permanent solutions to problems.

Teams are often formed, at management's request, to work on a specific problem in a process or system that is jeopardizing the quality of the products or services it provides to its customers. Once the problem is solved the team is disbanded and team members return to their regular duties. About 200 PATs or QATs are at work on various issues throughout the department. The issues range from improving data user services to customers, to pilot testing six natural work teams, to the requirements and design of the Census 2000.

. . . And One PAT Member Explains How

The following is an open letter from Gail Farren, a member of a Census Quality Management (CQM) Process Action Team:

I was one of the seven members of the Review/Documentation of the Publication Process PAT. It was a cross-divisional process action team with representatives from all the divisions involved in the demographic publication review, clearance, printing, and distribution process.

We met every week for eight months to complete our mission of documenting and reviewing the publication process for demographic reports—a task that had never been done before.

My participation in this PAT was a learning experience, to say the least. I learned to put my feelings aside when other members defined problems that stemmed from my division. I learned to look at those problems objectively, or at least from another person's perspective. Most importantly, I learned to work with the team to accomplish our mission.

Each of us brought our own unique talents to the effort, and we proved to be a well-balanced unit. I'm not saying that everything ran smoothly. We had meetings that accomplished nothing, and we had plenty of disagreements and disappointments. One member said, "If I hadn't known we would go through a 'storming' period, I would've said get me out of here!" But, at one point, we realized that the tons of information we were gathering were starting to make sense, and that maybe we really were heading in the right direction.

I think everyone comes away from a PAT with some positive feelings especially if the team reaches its goal. Here are some of my ideas about what we could do to be sure that every PAT is positive.

More training would make team members feel comfortable earlier in the process. The member I quoted above had completed Problem Solving and knew the phases a team goes through before it becomes fully effective. Training for team members would instill the confidence needed to put their "all" into the effort.

There should be some guidelines about participation in PATs. As more teams are formed, every employee should be encouraged to participate rather than assigning the same employee(s) to work on every team within an area.

PATs take time and resources, and they should be considered part of our work, not an additional duty. Supervisors and steering committees need to make participation a priority and adjust workloads accordingly.

My experience on this PAT made me realize how little I knew about my workplace, and I discovered how my work affects the work of others. I am pleased and proud that my team's findings have had such an impact on the work in so many divisions. Even though we no longer meet, all of us continue to work on projects that have come from our recommendations.

NOAA's Challenge: Economi

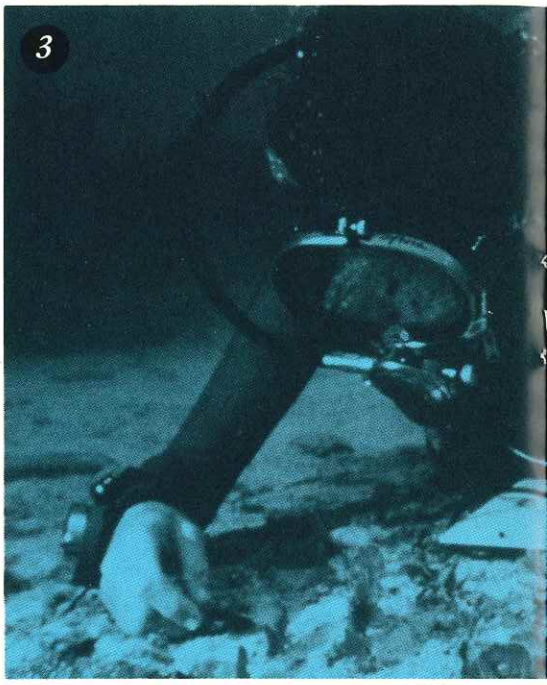
By Jerry Slaff

One of U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown's goals is to maintain a harmonious relationship between America's economy and its environment. That's what the Secretary told the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries in testimony earlier this year. And, certainly, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was listening because—in Commerce—it is the key agency charged with achieving that balance.

Containing more than one-third of all Commerce employees and more than half its budget, NOAA has a colorful 25-year history and a challenging future in the new administration.

NOAA has experienced dramatic changes in the issues it faces. Ten years ago, only six marine sanctuaries—the nation's "undersea national parks"—existed. Two U.S.-owned satellites helped forecasters predict the weather—but only up to two days in advance. Thousands of Chinook Salmon poured through the rivers of the Pacific Northwest. Weather service modernization was just a concept.

All that's changed. NOAA now manages 13 marine sanctuaries, including Massachusetts Stellwagen Bank, which was added this summer. The satellite images that forecasters now use come from one replaced U.S. satellite and one borrowed from European agencies. Salmon have become scarcer: only two Chinook Salmon returned to the Snake River this season, prompting a change in their status to "protected"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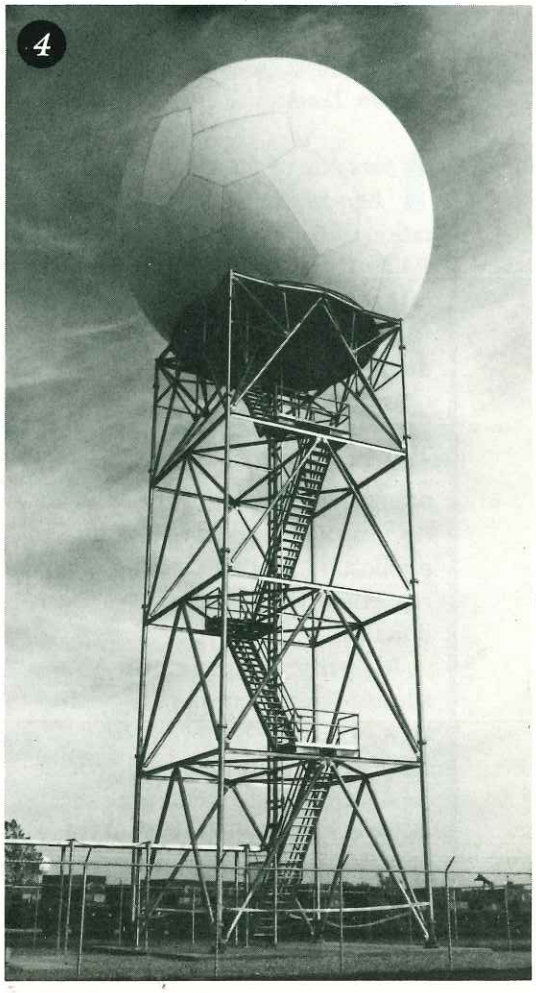
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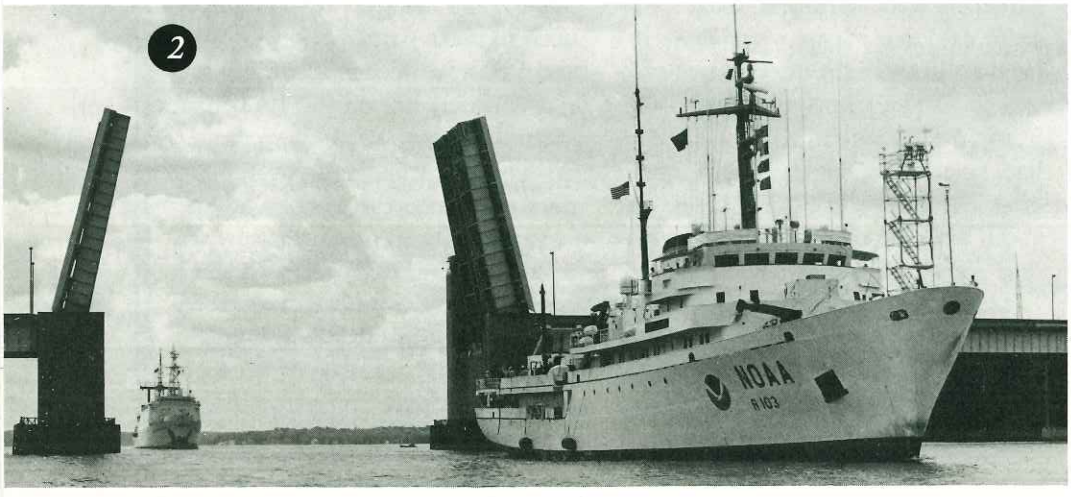

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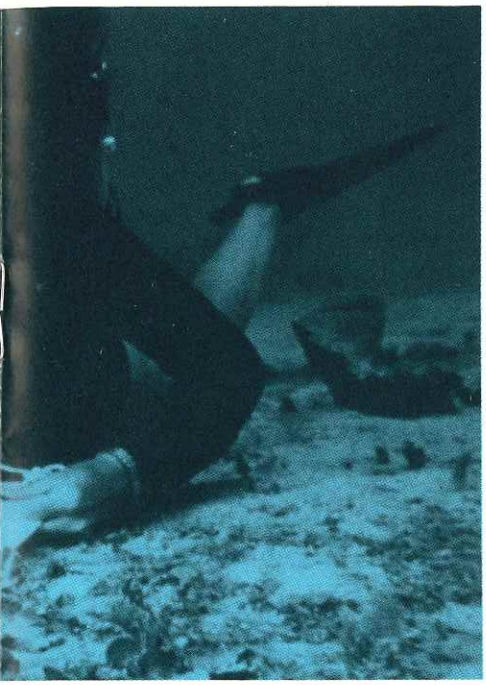

1. A NOAA Aircraft P-3, aptly called a hurricane hunter, is based in Southern Florida and seeks out hurricane activity.
2. NOAA Corps Fleet sailing under the raised Woodrow Wilson Bridge under the Beltway.
3. A NOAA Oceanographer taking samples from the ocean floor.
4. The Doppler radar system, a integral part of the National Weather Service's modernization program.
5. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service oversees commercial fishing activities.
6. Divers inspect the recovered anchor of the USS Monitor. NOAA's National Ocean Service operates this national marine sanctuary off the North Carolina coast.
7. The Earth's Western Hemisphere taken from the GOES-7 spacecraft at an altitude of 22,000 miles. GOES acquires an image every 30 minutes, making it an invaluable tool for monitoring our world.
8. Part of the East Coast over-the-horizon radar antenna array. Used during the Cold War, such radar can be used for peacetime purposes such as monitoring wind conditions over huge ocean areas.

under the Endangered Species Act. And Weather Service modernization is well underway.

What will NOAA look like 10 years from now, once we're well into the 21st century? While no one can forecast what specific issues will occupy the agency in the future (who could have predicted the Exxon Valdez oil spill), the Clinton administration's vision for NOAA over the next 10 years includes continued improvement through upgrading and modernizing the products and services it provides to the American public.

All that NOAA does — from charting the seas, to predicting the course of a hurricane, to protecting marine

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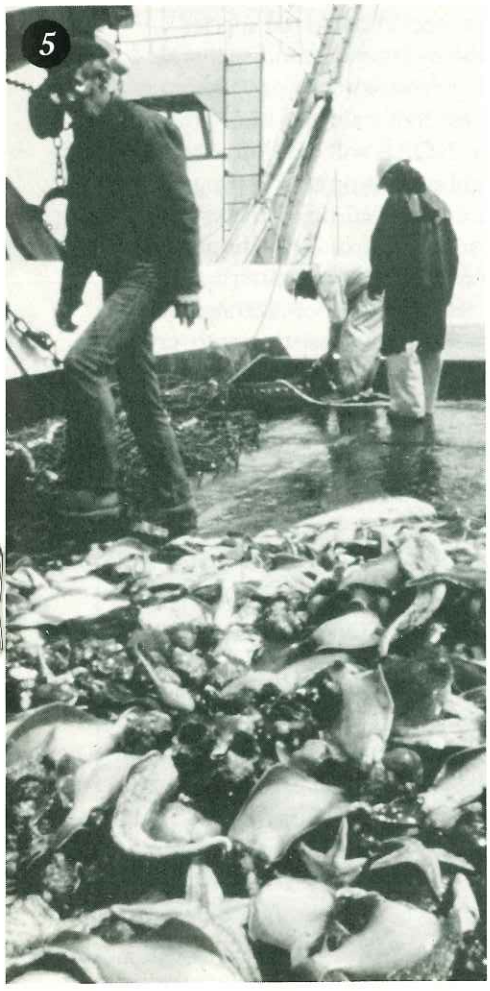

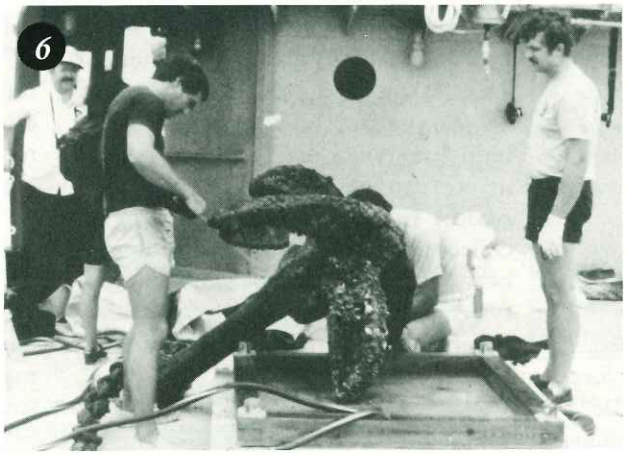

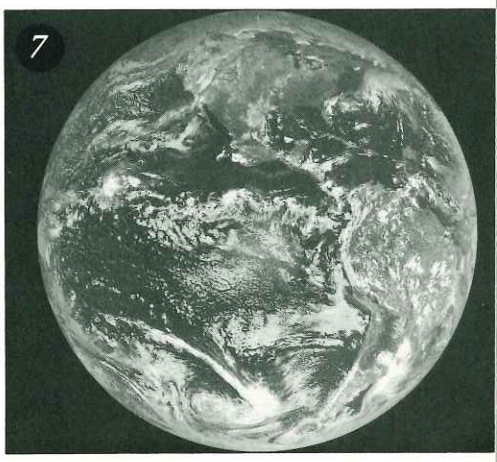

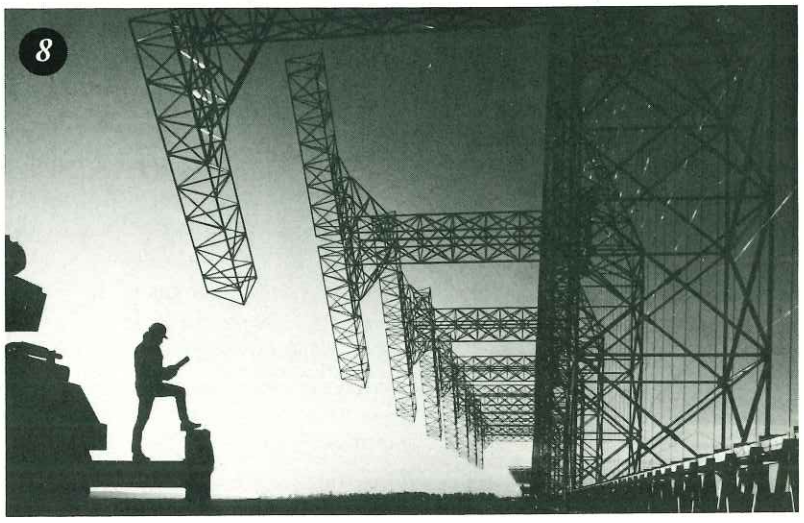

NOAA's Challenge — *Cont'd from p. 9*

mammals — can be summed up under two headings: Environmental Assessment and Prediction and Stewardship of Natural Resources.

The first category includes NOAA's polar and geostationary satellites, research into the state of the Earth's ozone layer and routine daily and long-term weather forecasts.

The latter area includes the nation's fisheries, coastal zone management and oil spill clean-ups.

Environmental Assessment

Man's relationship with nature, the world around us, is a watchful one. He can try to understand it, but can't control it. Man can try to live in harmony with nature, but as the residents of south Florida found out last year, nature can lash out at any time.

But not without warning. The performance of NOAA's National Weather Service and its advanced Doppler radar installations during Hurricane Andrew was a glimpse into what the future holds for NOAA, and for a nation dependent on reliable forecasts for a stable and strong economy. State-of-the-art Doppler radar in Melbourne, Fla., provided forecasters with clear images of Andrew's approach—180 miles away from the eye of the storm. Thus, forecasters in Miami could issue precise local hurricane watches and warnings with unprecedented lead times of up to 36 hours before the storm touched land. These projections of where and when the hurricane would strike let state and local emergency managers make plans and coordinate evacuation efforts, saving countless lives.

The new Doppler radars and automated observing systems—part of the $4 billion National Weather Service modernization, set to be completed by the year 2000—are integral to NOAA's goal of improving short-term warnings and forecasts. Two other areas designated for improvement are NOAA's forecasting of solar activity, which can affect electricity transmission from power plants to homes and businesses, as well as coastal tidal forecasting. Collectively, these modernized forecast and warning services can help mitigate risks in land, sea and air transportation; in construction, and in many other sectors of the economy. But perhaps the most important goal of these improvements is to make commonplace the kind of Herculean, life-saving efforts that were witnessed before and during Hurricane Andrew.

Longer term forecasts from months to years ahead are also going to be improved in the next 10 years, yielding greater accuracy and making them more economically useful. Such forecasts will depend on acquiring measurements not only from the local atmosphere, but the world over, especially the tropical oceans.

Issues, such as possible ozone depletion and the rise of sea level, require long-term assessments and forecasts of 10 years or more. Some will affect high-level policy decisions, and policymakers can rely on NOAA science for advice. In the near future, in order to collect scientific data, a global climate observing system will be needed — a system that will include global ocean observations from the bottom of the sea and from the poles.

Stewardship of the Environment

Stewardship of America's coasts and the marine life they encompass has been a NOAA responsibility since its inception in 1970. Its concerns include oil spills, depleted fish stocks, endangered marine mammals and charting the coastal ocean floor.

One task NOAA faces is reconciling environmental protection and conservation of living marine resources with economic growth. Supporting the Endangered Species and the Marine Mammal Protection Acts, as well as the recently signed International Biodiversity Treaty, are part of the agency's function.

But while NOAA is set to be an important global environmental player, the challenge is complicated by legitimate and competing demands of commercial and recreational fishing and forms of coastal development.

Over the next 10 years, NOAA will upgrade many ways it obtains and analyzes coastal data and what it does with that information. For example, it will:

- Expand the collection of fisheries data and improve accuracy of fishery population forecasts;
- Reduce unwanted bycatch through more effective commercial fishing technologies;
- Increase compliance with conservation and fisheries management rules;
- Improve assessment techniques of protected marine species;
- Expand cooperation between government and the private sector to help protect endangered species.

Healthy coasts are indispensable to a thriving economy. In partnership with other federal, state and local governments, NOAA will develop a national coastal health monitoring program to promote the well-being of key coastal ecosystems. Beyond the monitoring program, NOAA is committed to creating technologies for cleaning contaminated coasts, assisting recovery of marine resources and assessing the success of these efforts.

The charting of America's coasts, also one of NOAA's responsibilities, is marching into the 21st century, too.

Over the next 10 years, NOAA intends to update its nautical surveys, make available its huge storehouse of digital nautical information and modernize its marine forecasting capabilities to give mariners real-time predictions in American ports.

NOAA employees know that to prepare for a bright future, 21st century initiatives must start today. NOAA is meeting that challenge, and its responses could give the American — and global — ecosystems a new lease on life.

NOAA Means 'Yes' To Many

You could hang a "We Never Close" sign over many NOAA offices which are 365-day-a-year, 24-hour-a-day jobs, and whose breadth and scope are wide and varied. In one year, for example, NOAA will:

- issue 2.5 million routine public weather forecasts.
- send out 12,000 severe weather and flood warnings.
- collect 34,000 cloud images from its geostationary weather satellite (GOES).
- oversee 2 million square miles of ocean.
- regulate nearly 20 percent of the world's fishery catches.
- produce 10,000 different editions of aeronautical charts and 1,500 editions of nautical charts and maps.
- respond to 200 hazardous material spills.

Like most federal agencies, NOAA does not operate in a vacuum. But NOAA-gathered information and analyses are used by virtually every federal department and many independent agencies. Here are some:

- Department of Defense (environmental monitoring and prediction, including "space weather").
- Department of the Interior (natural resource management and environmental hazards).
- Department of Transportation (aviation and maritime charting and weather services).
- Department of Energy (earth/environmental science).
- Department of Health and Human Services (environmental science and public health).
- Department of Agriculture (weather and climate information).
- Environmental Protection Agency (environmental science and observations).
- NASA (earth remote sensing and research).

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY CRUISES

NOAA has arranged with Sea Center Passage Productions a series of visits to the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary off Santa Barbara, Calif., aboard the 88-foot vessel Condor.

The Condor will cruise to various locations in the 1,252 square (nautical) mile sanctuary. Passengers will hear lectures from Sea Center naturalists and some trips feature live underwater tours led by divers equipped with video sound cameras linked to the boat.

Trips leave, weather permitting, Santa Barbara harbor at 8 a.m. and return about 5 p.m. If a voyage is cancelled because of inclement weather, tickets will be refunded or trips rescheduled.

Passage may be booked by calling: (805) 963-3564.

The 1993 schedule and costs:

Sept. 19 & Oct. 17: Examination of kelp forest via divers' transmission of images and audio to onboard video monitors. Live tank of marine organisms aboard $65.

Nov. 14: Shark authority Rocky Strong, naturalists and divers examine sharks up close with video transmissions to ship board monitors $65.

Dec. 5: Visit to the wreck of a sunken minesweeper in waters off Santa Cruz Island $65.

NOAA BRIEFS THE MEDIA: NOAA's National Weather Service was the topic at a recent National Press Club luncheon. In conjunction with a speech before club members by Robert Sheets, director of NOAA's National Hurricane Center, the National Weather Service installed a photo exhibit in the National Press Club lobby. Titled "Storms of the Century," it pictures damage inflicted by major hurricanes and shows how the Weather Services's $4.2 million modernization program is improving storm warnings. Here, E.W. (Joe) Friday, Jr., left, NOAA deputy assistant administrator of the weather service, explains the service's new high performance Doppler radar to Clayton Boyce, Knight-Ridder News Service, president of the press club.

NOAA Corps, Air Force Share 'Space'

By LCDR Neal Millett, NOAA

Who's tuned into space's environment?

Some of the "eyes" and "ears" belong to the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Corps and the U.S. Air Force.

Through a unique partnership with NOAA's Space Environment Laboratory (one of 11 facilities within the U.S. Dept. of Commerce's Environmental Research Laboratories), the NOAA Corps and Air Force Space Forecast Center officers and enlisted personnel jointly operate an international network of solar observatories which provide continuous ground-based observations of solar activity.

These observatories provide data for NOAA's Space Environmental Lab (SEL) and its Space Environment Services Center, which operates the Space Environment Forecast Center in Boulder, Colorado.

The center is responsible for issuing space environment forecasts, alerts. warnings and products to the national and international space community and to civilian customers.

Information from the solar observatories allows researchers, forecasters and technicians at Boulder to correlate ground-based observations with data collected by space environment monitors aboard NOAA spacecraft.

It's just one of SEL's activities, which are aimed at improving the ability to forecast solar activity and the resulting disturbances that can affect the earth's environment.

The SEL and the NOAA Corps/Air Force partnership have been the international focal point for space environment research since 1968.

One of their observatories, the Learmonth Solar Observatory in Australia, has been operated jointly by Air Force officers and enlisted personnel by NOAA Corps officers and by the Australian Dept. of Administrative Services personnel since the site was established in 1979.

The international agreement to establish the Learmonth site also provides for the joint operation of the Culgoora Solar Observatory in New South Wales, Australia by NOAA Corps officers and Australian personnel.

All eight international observatories contribute to SEL through reports of sunspots and solar flares, as well as radio bursts arising from solar flares.

As NOAA's Space Environment Laboratory and the Air Force's Space Forecast Center approach their third decade of providing cooperative science to the nation, new sensors are being fabricated and installed aboard NASA and NOAA spacecraft. Some are scheduled for launch this decade. They will provide continuous solar wind measurements and solar x-ray images.

Experts believe this new information will revolutionize SEL's ability to issue alerts and warnings of solar activity and its possible effects on the solar-terrestrial environment.

At the Space Environmental Services Center Observatory, NOAA Corps and Air Force personnel work together. Here, the solar telescope looms behind Capt. Paul Gehred, USAF, (left) and Lt.(JG) Graham Steward, NOAA, (right), as they complete the sunspot analysis.

Consumer Corner: Subscriptions

Q. My wife and I have been billed for and received magazines recently which we didn't order. We don't know why this is happening, but we want it stopped. What can we do?

A. If you suspect that someone is ordering magazines for you without your authorization, contact the subscription departments for the magazines. Request:

- cancellation of the subscription and written confirmation of the cancellation;
- subscription order dates; and
- copies of the original order cards which will have the handwriting of the person ordering the magazines.

Supply this information to your postmaster or the Postal Inspection Service office in your area so that the matter can be investigated.

In any case, the magazines will usually cooperate by cancelling the subscriptions and stopping bills immediately. You should take action to try to resolve the problem as soon as you notice something is wrong. Otherwise, the magazine companies may notify credit reporting agencies that you haven't paid the bills and your good credit will be jeopardized.

Q. I was shopping for computer software when the salesman let it slip that he was illegally using copyrighted software. I think this needs to be reported, but to whom?

A. You should inform the makers of the software, if you have evidence that the store's personnel are illegally using the copyrighted material. Then you or the software firm may want to contact the local FBI office with the evidence. The FBI will investigate if there is reason to believe that the problem is widespread. The company may also want to file a private lawsuit to seek redress. If you have other questions about copyrights, contact the Library of Congress, which issues them. The Copyright Office can be reached at (202) 707-3000.

Q. We rented a car at the Phoenix airport at 10:30 on a Friday morning. We got a weekly rate and returned the car the following Friday. Nowhere in the contract did it say that we had to return the car by 10:30 a.m. on that day or pay extra, so we brought it back at 3 p.m. I believe we deserve a refund, since we should have been told the return time up front.

A. As a matter of good business practice, the rental company could have specified the return time for your rental. However, we were unable to locate any federal or state rules requiring that information. As your letter noted, the contract did state that one day is equivalent to 24 hours, which would indicate that your rental was for seven 24-hour periods. In any case, your rental car company told us that they are sending you a refund check for the additional day as a good will gesture.

Q. I have some beautiful pottery mugs from a trip to Mexico that I've used for quite some time, but a friend told me that there is a danger of lead poisoning. Is this true?

A. According to the Food and Drug Administration, most pottery glazes contain lead but are safe because they have been formulated to prevent leaching and the ceramic ware has been fired properly. However, there is concern about regularly used ceramic ware purchased in foreign countries, because they may not meet U.S. safety standards. In particular, pottery from Mexico, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong or India should be tested for leaching or used for decoration only.

Mugs pose a particular problem, since FDA found that about 80% of adult exposure to lead from food eaten from ceramic ware comes from frequently drinking hot acidic beverages, such as coffee, tea and tomato soup, from mugs. To limit exposure to lead from ceramic mugs,

- avoid daily use of the mugs for hot drinks,
- do not store acidic foods in the mugs,
- do not use the mugs if a chalky residue is left on the glaze after washing, or better yet,
- use the mugs for decorative purposes only.

If you have other questions, contact the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-LEAD-FYI.

Q. In the last issue of *Commerce People*, there was a question about sunscreen SPFs (sun protection factor). I understand that there may be new requirements for sunscreen labels. What are they?

A. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed sunscreen labeling requirements in order to help consumers better protect themselves from sun damage. FDA's proposal would require that:

- the SPF be limited to a maximum of 30;
- tanning products without sunscreen bear a warning that they don't protect against sunburn;
- all sunscreens and suntan products inform consumers about the sun's potential harm and the product's ability to protect.

For more information, contact the FDA's Office of Consumer Affairs at (301) 443-3170.

GOOD NEWS FOR CONSUMERS:

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service protects consumers and business from mail fraud, including phony job opportunities, chain letters, advance fee loan schemes and charities fraud. If the mails were used to carry out the scheme, the Postal Inspection Service investigates for violations of law.

Recently, Tampa Postal Inspectors announced that the owner/operator of a telemarketing sales boiler room which sold computer printer ribbons to large businesses at prices inflated 200% to 500% over legitimate vendors was indicted by a federal grand jury on 20 counts of mail fraud and money laundering.

Postal Inspectors and other agencies investigated another case in which a Texas oil and gas investment scheme allegedly defrauded over 200 investors of about $5 million. The investigation led to the 24-count indictment of 12 people on mail fraud, wire fraud, conspiracy, money laundering and other charges.

Consumer and business complaints are the primary basis for investigations.

Directory Published

The June 1993 edition of the ***Consumer Services Directory*** is now available from the Office of Consumer Affairs. Commerce agency programs and materials of interest to consumers are highlighted in the new 41-page directory. Descriptions of agency activities and services, publications, and contacts are included. For a copy, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs at (202) 482-5001 or fax (202) 482-6007.

Personnel Dialogue: Representing Friend Before IRS

Q. Can I represent a friend before the Internal Revenue Service on a tax matter? I will not be compensated for this representation?

A. No, you cannot represent your friend before the Internal Revenue Service, even without compensation. Under 18 U.S.C. 205, a Federal employee may not represent anyone, other than him/herself, his/her spouse, children, or parents, with or without compensation, before a Federal agency in any matter in which the United States is a party or has a direct or substantial interest. Contact your personnel office or the Office of the Assistant General Counsel for Administration for more detailed information.

Q. In addition to my full-time government job I have always worked a part-time (non-government) job to supplement my income. If I lose my full-time position with Commerce under conditions that would make me eligible for unemployment compensation, will I still be eligible to receive unemployment benefits if I keep my part-time job?

A. You may be eligible to receive unemployment compensation benefits. However, any earnings you receive from your part-time job will generally reduce your weekly unemployment benefit amount. Should you lose your position with Commerce, you must file your claim with your local employment security office and your benefits will be based on the unemployment compensation laws of the state in which you were employed. For more specific details, you should contact your state employment security office.

Q. I understand that if someone wanted to volunteer their services to work in a federal agency, they could do so. Is this is true? If it is, what can you tell me about the use of volunteers in the Department of Commerce?

A. Generally speaking, there is a prohibition against the government accepting services offered by a person on his or her own initiative. Moreover, in instances where voluntary services can legitimately be accepted, there are provisions that the service cannot be used to displace or replace any employee in an organization's work force.

The limited situations in which certain federal agencies can accept voluntary services from individuals are specifically set out in various laws. One situation that applies across all federal departments and agencies, including Commerce, is the acceptance of volunteer service from students. Student volunteers can be used in the Department of Commerce, subject to certain conditions that are established by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the Department. Department policy requires that there be a written agreement between the operating unit, the student's school, and the volunteer student. This is important to insure that objectives, responsibilities and conditions or limitations of the student's service are clearly understood. In early 1993, the department issued Department Administrative Order (DAO) 202-311 on Voluntary and Uncompensated Services; the DAO includes a sample of a Student Volunteer Service Agreement.

Q. Are there restrictions such as grade level, field of study, or citizenship of the student volunteers?

A. There is detailed guidance on virtually every aspect of the student volunteer program in the department's DAO and Office of Personnel Management's Federal Personnel Manual. In general, the Department's policy is that volunteers should be at least age 16 or in the tenth grade. Noncitizens should ordinarily not serve as student volunteers. The best approach to take if you have specific questions about the use of student volunteers is to consult with your servicing Personnel Office specialist.

Q. It seems to me that federal employees are being asked to bear a disproportionate share of the costs of reducing the federal deficit. Many people in the private sector have lost their jobs or foregone raises in the past few years, so I am willing to take my bite too — but, does this mean we won't be getting transportation subsidies?

A. The department policy on transportation subsidies is that each operating unit has the discretion to participate with state or local governments in programs to encourage the use of mass public transportation, in light of its own funding, the interest of its employees and the availability of local transportation programs and systems. To find out whether your operating unit plans to have a program in your area, you should check with your personnel officer or administrative officer. The legislation authorizing transportation subsidies expires on Dec. 31, 1993. It is uncertain at this point if the authority will be extended.

Q. How long are performance evaluations retained and for what purposes are they used?

A. Copies of employees' performance ratings of record, including the performance plans, (elements, standards, progress reviews, ratings and rating justifications), are retained in an envelope on the left side of your Official Personnel Folder or in a separate Employee Performance File.

Performance ratings of record are retained for four years. This is a government-wide requirement. The only exceptions are: (1) Senior Executive Service ratings, which are retained for five years, and (2) when a final and binding administrative or judicial decision requires that other actions be taken.

Continued on p. 15

Commerce People

Published monthly for employees of the U.S. Department of Commerce by the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), Office of the Secretary.

Letters should be addressed to U.S. Department of Commerce, Room 5610, Herbert C. Hoover Building, Washington, D.C., 20230.

News items may be mailed, or phoned in to the editor on FTS (202) 482-3263.

Jill Schuker..... OPA Director
Steve Teasley.....OPA

Is Your Commerce Computer Humming Along While You're Out?

Why bother turning off your computer when you leave for lunch or for home?

After all, you'll simply have to restart it when you return.

If that's your attitude, you're not worried about conserving energy. And, you're not in step with official concern over energy efficiency in the operation of federal buildings. Recent legislation requiring federal agencies to reduce building energy use has caused most federal employees to begin looking more closely at energy used by personal computers and associated equipment.

Executive Order 12759 of April 17, 1991, requires that Federal agencies reduce their energy consumption to 20 percent below the 1985 levels by the year 2000.

Personal computers are responsible for the fastest growing segment of energy usage in federal buildings. The increased use of personal computers has added to the burden placed on building air conditioning systems and electrical components, say experts.

Research suggests that 30 percent to 40 percent of all computers are left on at night and over weekends, and that during the day computers are active less than 20 percent of the time.

Over time, the personal computers and associated equipment which are used in the federal workforce will be replaced with technologically advanced equipment that will automatically "power-down" when not being used. In the meantime, there are several procedures which can be adopted that will help reduce the consumption of energy used in buildings like those used by Commerce.

A key component to reducing energy consumed by the use of personal computers is to promote employee awareness on energy efficient practices, the experts say.

The following tips will help to save energy and ease the burden on Federal building air conditioning and electrical systems:

1. Turn equipment off during non-work hours. The energy consumption of a typical personal computer can be reduced by more than 75 percent by simply turning off the machine during non-work hours.
2. Turn equipment off whenever you leave the office for an extended period of time or for any long period of inactivity when it will not be inconvenient to re-boot or re-start.
3. Turn off just the monitor between shorter absences of use. This will reduce the unit's power consumption about 50 percent and will not require a re-boot to return to work.

PERSONNEL DIALOGUE—*Cont'd from p. 14*

Performance records are not normally retained when the employee leaves the Department.

Performance evaluations are used for several purposes. For example, they are used to document performance which merits an award; they are considered in evaluating applicants for promotion; they are used to grant additional service credit in reductions-in-force; they may be relied upon as a basis for approving training; and they may be the basis for taking actions based on unacceptable performance, such as within-grade increase denials, demotions, or removals.

As you can see, performance appraisals may substantially impact your employment. This should be kept in mind as you participate in the Department's performance management program.

The Performance Appraisal System Software (PASS) electronic performance appraisal system was described in the March issue of Commerce People. PASS is a menu-driven software package that allows users to create work plans, and write progress reviews and performance appraisals on their computer. The software also produces the CD-396 Performance Management Record.

The following comment from a user of the system was sent to the Office of Human Resources Management: "I want to thank you for the PASS system. On Tuesday at 9:30 my supervisor called to say that the ratings had to be in by COB Tuesday. I had only done one. I carried the final ratings over to him at 5:10. At 5:15 he told me that the new plans for the coming year had to be done by COB Friday.

"I just finished [Friday, 2:30]. My usual schedule for doing performance plans was to come in one Saturday or Sunday, before the ratings to prepare the justifications and then again before the preparation of the new plan. I figured an average of eight hours per employee, not counting the frustration of typing or feeding forms into the printer. For the first time in 10 years I am able to enjoy the full weekends in Spring. Thank you."

If you write or review performance appraisals, PASS can help! See your servicing personnel office for information on how to get a copy of this valuable software tool.

Q. I recently performed jury duty during work hours and was given a check by the court to cover mileage, meals, lodging, and per diem. Am I allowed to keep the money?

A. Yes, you are entitled to keep that portion reimbursing you for expenses for mileage, meals, and lodging. You are not entitled to retain any payment of a fee or salary (e.g., per diem) for any time spent in court, or travel time to and from court, that corresponds to your scheduled work time and for which you received pay for your Federal position. Determining what fees can be retained is based on your work schedule, tour of duty, pay status and when the jury duty is performed. For additional information concerning entitlement to retention of jury duty fees, you should contact your servicing personnel office.

Gutiérrez Helps MASC Celebrate Anniversary

Gloria Gutiérrez, Acting Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, helped the Mountain Administrative Support Center (MASC) celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Ms. Gutiérrez addressed an audience of about 300 employees of the Boulder Laboratories, providing a brief update of the National Performance Review, the Commerce Performance Review and proposals for selected Reinvention Laboratories within Commerce.

According to Ms. Gutiérrez, the reinvention activities represent an opportunity to "significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government. Life is enriched by taking chances both in professional and in personal endeavors, to always make safe choices means losing opportunities to grow and learn."

Ms. Gutiérrez's attitudes on risk taking are borne out by her choice of recreational activities—she rides a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and sky dives. She encouraged the audience to reach out and welcome change to further the reinvention process in the Department of Commerce.

An outspoken leader in Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management, Ms. Gutiérrez discussed the increasing role of women and minorities in the work force of the future.

While in Boulder, Ms. Gutiérrez attended a dinner meeting with more than 40 women employees of the Boulder Laboratories. At the dinner, she addressed the issues of particular interest to women in the work force and answered questions on her experiences and views on diversity and public service.

Following her address to the Boulder Laboratories, Curtis Hill, director of the Mountain Administrative Support Center, presents Gloria Gutiérrez with a t-shirt commemorating the 10th anniversary of the MASC.

PIONEER — *Cont'd from p. 6*

that can be transferred to other offices within Commerce who manage similar projects, or whose offices could benefit from the shared knowledge as in the case of the following projects.

ITA's Pioneer Fund Program **Forms Automation Saves Time** is being utilized heavily by other offices while ESA's **Imaging Optical Storage System** Program coordinators are at the point of being able to counsel interested offices in how they may incorporate electronic scanning and storage methods into their everyday work practices. Both these projects can substantially cut costs, save time and improve the effectiveness of a given office, administrators say.

The grants are just about evenly distributed between the field offices and headquarters — over the course of six years, 29 grants have been awarded to field offices while another 33 were granted in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

The projects financed cover a range of topics, including **Optimized Digital Elevation Data** managed by the National Weather Service in Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Bureau of Export Administration's **Improvement of the Verification Process in Dumping Investigations**; and the Patent and Trademark Office's **Development of a Group Incentive Awards** Program.

A project to keep an eye on is the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration's **Geographic Information System for Tourism Development**. Tourism plays a major role in the economy, both in the dollars brought into the country as well as the Americans employed, and this newly-funded project could well help the department better manage this important sector of the economy.

These projects are just a sampling of the 62 innovative ideas hatched as a result of the Pioneer Fund Program. To get a copy of the study which includes a complete list of all projects funded as well as general facts and information about the program, readers can contact the program manager, Leslie Albright, at the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Budget, Planning and Organization, Room 5317, Washington, D.C. 20230.